(a) whether the potentials of Jharkhand for cultivation of medicinal plants and energy plantations like Ethanol have been examined;

(b) if so, the details of the findings thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) No specific study has been conducted to examine the potential for cultivation of medicinal plants and energy plantation in the State of Jharkhand.

(c) The Government of India is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Macro Management in Agriculture-Supplementation/ Complementation of States' efforts through Work Plan under which the State Governments can take up various programmes including the cultivation of medicinal plants as per their felt needs and requirements. The State Governments prepare the Work Plan after ascertaining the potential and requirement. Besides, the National Medicinal Plants Board under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is also implementing schemes for cultivation of medicinal plants in the country including Jharkhand.

Drought relief measures in Andhra Pradesh

3174. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH:
DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central team which recently toured Andhra Pradesh, identified actual areas, Districts and Mandals affected by drought;

(b) if so, the full details of the areas, Districts and Mandals identified under drought;

(c) whether any action has been taken by Government with regards to relief measures in Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) if so, details of various relief measures taken, so far, by Central and State Governments in Andhra Pradesh to mitigate the sufferings of the affected people and livestock, District-wise and Mandal-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) A Study Team led by the Area Officer visited Andhra Pradesh in February, 2003 for assessment of requirement of additional assistance from National Calamity Contingency

Fund (NCCF) etc. for the drought of 2002-03. Taking into account all relevant factors and the approval by the High Level Committee (HLC) and Task Force on Drought Management, total assistance of Rs. 123.51 crores from NCCF and 17.20 lakh MTs of foodgrains for relief employment were provided to the State for the drought 2002-03. In addition, the Railways arranged free transportation of foder to the drought affected areas in the State.

Prices of agricultural commodities

3175. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether prices of agricultural commodities are declining rapidly during the last few years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the corrective measures taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) According to the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) with base 1993-94 = 100, the prices of agricultural commodities increased by 3.6 per cent during the year ended 2nd August, 2003 compared with 3.3 per cent and 3.7 per cent respectively during the corresponding previous two years, i.e. years ended on 3rd August, 2002 and 4th August, 2001.

(c) To minimize the impact of fluctuations in prices the Government announces Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for major kharif and rabi crops. MSPs enable the farmers to sell their produce at remunerative prices whenever the market prices fall below the MSP.

Milk and vegetable booth at BKS Marg

3176. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is no DMS stall or Mother Dairy milk and vegetable booth at Baba Kharag Singh Marg, New Delhi, near Gole Dakhana and as a result thereof the residents of these areas and of adjoining areas such as Mahadev Road and Pant Marg are facing difficulties for years in making purchases of articles of daily use; and